



TOWN OF NARRAGANSETT
Narragansett Historic District Commission
Department of Community Development
25 Fifth Avenue, Narragansett, RI 02882

Narragansett Historic District Property Owners' Guide

October 8, 2010





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Narragansett Historic District Commission
Department of Community Development
25 Fifth Avenue, Narragansett, RI 02882

401 782 0632 (Town Hall)

October 2010

Dear Property Owner:

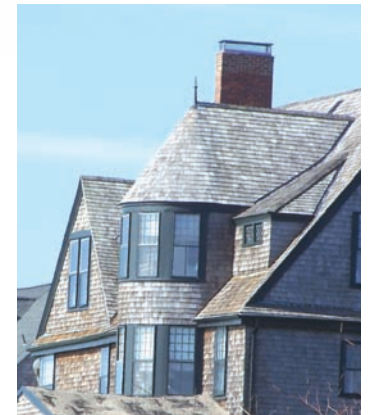
I am pleased to provide you with this brief guide to use when contemplating home improvement projects requiring building permits within Narragansett's Historic Districts. The Guide is intended to provide helpful information and a link to our page on the Town's website, www.narragansettri.gov, and to valuable assistance you may receive from the staff in the Town's Department of Community Development.

Preserving the Town's character, its heritage, and its historic buildings for our children and grandchildren is an important goal that we all share as a community. I can speak for all the members of the Narragansett Historic District Commission, the Town Council, and the Town staff when I say that we hope to be your faithful assistants and information resource in this great and worthwhile endeavor.

With best wishes,

Keith Lescarbeau
Chairman, Narragansett Historic District Commission

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Cover illustration: A Windmill Tower & Water Tank at Narragansett Pier, R.I.
Constable Brothers Architects. *Scientific American*, March 1887

CONSIDER EXPEDITED REVIEW!

Whenever a project plan proposes work which essentially retains, maintains, or replaces in-kind severely deteriorated building materials and architectural features, and meets the *NHDC Historic Preservation Standards and Guidelines*, the project may qualify for an administrative expedited review for a Certificate of Appropriateness. This fast-track approach is encouraged by the Town of Narragansett and the NHDC.

If a project is more complicated or varies from the *NHDC Historic Preservation Standards and Guidelines*, it may require a formal review by the NHDC.

HOW TO GET STARTED WITH YOUR PROJECT

Stop by the Department of Community Development Office at Town Hall (25 Fifth Ave.) to discuss your project idea and seek assistance. If you have old and current photographs of the building, old post card views, old drawings, building histories or other information please bring them with you. The Department does have building inventory forms for most of the historic properties within the districts and other related historical information to share. Visit the Town website (www.narragansett.ri.gov) to read the *NHDC Historic Preservation Standards and Guidelines* and review the application form for a Certificate of Appropriateness.



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INTRODUCTION

This booklet is provided by the Town of Narragansett as a simple and quick reference for property owners in Narragansett's four historical zoning districts who are contemplating an exterior building project requiring a building permit.

Narragansett has a distinctive heritage as a New England Victorian seaside resort. Vacationers are drawn to the Town from across the country and from abroad to enjoy the authentic ambiance of this historic seaside place, including its well-preserved wooden summer home architecture.

Significantly most of these homes are well-cared for private residences within view of public roads, rights-of-way, public beaches, the ocean and rocky shoreline. Residents of the districts have taken considerable care in preserving and maintaining these buildings, showing great pride in ownership.

NARRAGANSETT'S HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Narragansett's four historical zoning districts. The Towers, Central Street, Earlescourt, and Ocean Road Historic Districts, represent important and different aspects of the town's resort heritage. All four are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the nation's list of properties that contribute to our shared cultural heritage and thereby worthy of preservation. To verify if your property is within one of the four historical zoning districts, please visit the Department of Community Development at Town Hall or www.narragansett.ri.gov.

PRESERVATION ZONING

Encouraging the preservation of the features of Narragansett's historic buildings and their settings is a high priority for the Town. In enacting historical area zoning in 2009, the Town intends to assist and guide property owners on saving Narragansett's heritage for the future benefit of all residents.

Under the Town of Narragansett Zoning code, Chapter 917, all repairs and alterations affecting the exterior appearance of both historic and

non-historic structures and their landscape settings within Narragansett's regulated historic districts are reviewable by the Narragansett Historic District Commission (NHDC). The NHDC is appointed by the Town Council. Under the historical zoning statute, the NHDC must grant a *Certificate of Appropriateness* for any project affecting the exterior appearance of a building or its setting and requiring a Town building permit.

In accordance with the zoning ordinance, the Narragansett Town Council and the NHDC have adopted and published the *NHDC Historic Preservation Standards and Guidelines* to guide and review work that is proposed. These standards and guidelines are based upon those published by the federal government, many state governments and by similarly charged historic district commissions in Rhode Island and across the country. All decisions of the NHDC are determined by application of these standards and guidelines.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES GENERALLY

Essentially any alterations and repairs should accurately represent the historic qualities and character-defining historical features of the buildings, structures and landscape features of the districts.

Original documentation, such as old photographs and plans, should be used as guidance for restoration work whenever possible. Where these are not available, interpretations of similar design elements that were built or designed for buildings in the area may be considered.

New uses, additions, and new construction within the districts should fit in, rather than stand out and appear incongruous.

The *NHDC Historic Preservation Standards and Guidelines* should be consulted by historic district owners as they contemplate exterior work to be done on their properties requiring Town building permits. The *NHDC Historic Preservation Standards and Guidelines* are common sense guidance for the rehabilitation of historic buildings and their settings to ensure building longevity and sustainability.

The consultation process can begin early on with a visit to the Department of Community Development in Town Hall (25 Fifth Ave., 401-782-0632). The staff there will be happy to discuss your project, assist with understanding the *NHDC Historic Preservation Standards and Guidelines* and guide you through the review process.

The *NHDC Historic Preservation Standards and Guidelines* are available online at www.narragansettri.gov or can be obtained at the Department of Community Development in Town Hall (25 Fifth Ave.)

WHEN CONSIDERING A PROJECT ESTABLISH A SENSITIVE APPROACH

The primary objective of any rehabilitation plan for contributing structures within Narragansett's historic districts should be the preservation of the important or "character-defining" architectural materials and features of the building, and provision for a safe and sustainable contemporary use. Your project can be reviewed quickly and approved if you follow the *NHDC Historic Preservation Standards and Guidelines* and your project plan is in accord with:

Narragansett's Historic Preservation Philosophy

- **Respect** the original historical design character of the building and its setting. Don't try to make the building appear older (or younger) in architectural style than it really is. Above all, the genuine (authentic) heritage of Narragansett should be expressed; not an imagined history.
- **Research** the building to determine which elements are essential to its character. Include preservation of character-defining elements in your project plan.

A project plan should contain strategies for these three types of work where appropriate:

- **Retaining and providing protection and maintenance** of historic features that survive in generally good condition.
- **Repair** of historic materials and features that are deteriorated.
- **Replacement** of historic materials and features with new materials **in-kind** where deterioration is so extensive that repair is not possible.

A project plan may also include strategies for:

- **Reuse of buildings and associated alterations** to the exterior of the historic building to sustain the reuse and adapt the building with sensitivity.
- **Reversible additions** for new rooms or spaces to the exterior of the historic building provided character-defining features are not lost or compromised.